(vi) reduction in staff strength in India and abroad and (vii) abolition of several posts of India based officers abroad in the various departments.

Setting up of Aviation Security Force

157. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken to make Indian skies safer for air travel keeping in view the terrorist attacks in the United States; and

(b) the action taken to set up the special Aviation Security Force at an early date?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) The following measures have been taken to strengthen security at the airports in order to prevent hijackings and other unlawful interference with civil aviation operations:—

(i) Deployment of Sky Marshals on all routes of scheduled airlines at random basis.

(ii) Deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at all operational airports in a timebound manner.

(iii) Deployment of Quick Reaction Teams at major airports

(iv) Ladder point security check of passengers and their hand baggage made mandatory.

(b) CISF has now been entrusted with the responsibility of airport security.

Use of old Aircraft on Kolkata-Ne Region Routes

158. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Aircrafts now utilized in North-Eastern Region from Kolkata are old and not up to the mark/properly serviceable;

(b) whether Government have not received the information of frequent happening of disturbance to the passengers on this route from Kolkata-Imphal *via* Silchar/Aizwal; and

(c) the measures taken up for changing the existing aircrafts?